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ABSTRACT

Recent theory and research concerning sex roles have viewed masculinity and femininity as separate and independent dimensions of desirable human functioning, denoting dominant-instrumental and nurturant-expressive domains of behavior, respectively. Androgynous self-definitions may also provide greater adaptive advantages for members of both sexes. Male (N=386) and female (N=723) undergraduates completed the Personality Research Form ANDRO Scale and were classified as either masculine, feminine, androgynous, or undifferentiated; subjects also completed a Biographical Information Survey. Data revealed that masculinity scores related positively to prior parental cognitive encouragement, involvement in physical pursuits, freedom from dysphoric moods, and, among women only, to pro-feminist attitudes. Femininity scores were related positively to perceived parental warmth, current sociability, and, among women only, negatively to pro-feminist attitudes. Results suggest that androgynous self-definitions are meaningfully embedded in biographical variables suggestive of social competence. (Author/NRB)

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ANDROGYNOUS VS. TRADITIONAL SEX ROLES IN THE LIGHT OF BIOGRAPHICAL VARIABLES

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Androgynous vs. Traditional Sex Roles in the Light of Biographical Variables

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Recent theory and research in the area of sex roles have moved from the traditional assumption that psychological masculinity (M) and femininity (F) are the opposite endpoints of a single bipolar dimension to the proposition that M and F are separate and independent dimensions of desirable human functioning denoting dominant-instrumental and nurturant-expressive domains of behavior respectively (e.g., Bem, 1974; Berzins, Welling, & Wetter, 1978; Spence & Helmreich, 1978). Self-report instruments embodying this dualistic conception of sex roles typically classify individuals of both sexes into four categories: masculine (high M, low F), feminine (low M, high F), androgynous (high M, high F), and undifferentiated or indeterminate (low M, low F). Members of the human liberation movement have argued that androgynous self-definitions confer greater adaptive advantages on members of both sexes than do the traditionally masculine ones on men and feminine ones on women. The present study examined the cogency of this argument in the context of a wide variety of biographical variables.

A total of 1109 undergraduates (386 men, 723 women) at a large southeastern University completed the PRF ANDRO Scale (Berzins et al., 1978) and were classified into the four sex role categories by the usual procedure of splitting the total distributions of M and F scale scores at their respective normative medians. Participants also completed a 55-item multiple-choice Biographical Information Survey (BIS) tapping (a) general background variables (e.g., parental socioeconomic status); (b) perceived parental behaviors (e.g., maternal/paternal warmth, control); (c) high school activities and accomplish-

ments (e.g., leadership positions, athletics); (d) current self-evaluation (e.g., adjustment, self-confidence); (e) current extracurricular behaviors (e.g., dating, friends, athletics); (f) attitudes toward the Feminist Movement (e.g., ERA); and (g) anticipated lifestyles (e.g., number of children desired). Analyses of these data included correlational analyses of continuous variables, a principal components analysis of BIS items, chi-square analyses of categorical variables, and analyses of variance contrasting the four sex role orientations (for the sexes separately) across the BIS items, followed, in cases of significant overall differences, by planned comparisons of (a) androgynous (n = 160) vs. feminine (n = 338) women, and (b) androgynous (n = 92) vs. masculine (n = 178) men.

Although modest to moderate in magnitude, bivariate correlations between M and F and the nine principal components of the BIS disclosed that, in both sexes, M scores related positively to prior parental cognitive encouragement, involvement in physical/athletic pursuits, freedom from dysphoric moods, and among women only, to profeminist attitudes. In turn, F scores related positively to perceived parental warmth, current sociability (number of friends and chums) and among women only, negatively to profeminist attitudes. (Parental socioeconomic status, parental control in high school, and academic accomplishments were generally unrelated to M and F scores.) The overall pattern of correlational results was supportive of the theoretical definitions of M and F (Berzins et al., 1978) and with prior research in this area.

The results of planned comparisons between androgynous and traditional role orientations argued for the greater social competence of androgynous persons, particularly among women. Relative to their feminine counterparts, androgynous women reported significantly greater parental cognitive encourage-

ment when growing up; lesser parental control in high school; greater numbers of prior leadership positions, artistic-creative achievements, athletic and other group memberships; greater current social comfort, athletic ability and participation, feelings of "success," and freedom from depression. Relative to masculine men, androgynous men also reported greater numbers of prior leadership positions, group memberships and artistic/creative achievements; in addition, they had more friends currently and perceived themselves as having been more helpful to their friends in high school.

Analysis of the future life-style alternatives envisaged by androgynous women suggested that, since 51.5% anticipated pursuing graduate studies and 50.6% planned to have three or more children in their own future families, they may well require high levels of social competence to effectively integrate the demands of a career with those of a large family.

Overall, however, the results suggest that androgynous self-definitions, which combine high levels of dominant-instrumental and nurturant-expressive self-attributions, are meaningfully embedded in biographical variables suggestive of social competence. Traditional socialization practices, which tend to deemphasize dominant-instrumental behaviors in girls and nurturant-expressive ones in boys, do not appear to engender equivalent, let alone superior, outcomes in young college adults.

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Tables

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Table 1

Correlations between PRF ANDRO Subscales and Biographical Variable Clusters

	PRF ANDRO Subscales					
	Masculinity		Femininity		Self-esteem	
Biographical Cluster	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Parental Variables						
Cognitive encouragement	.18***	.12*	.08*	.07	.22***	.10*
Warmth	.01	-.08	.07*	.12**	.11**	.05
Control	-.05	-.01	.03	-.04	-.11**	.01
Socioeconomic status	.07*	-.01	-.00	-.05	.14***	.04
Personal Characteristics						
Personal adjustment	.21***	.18***	-.06	-.07	.45***	.51***
Athletic participation	.36***	.16**	-.04	.06	.19***	.25***
Prior academic achievements	.05	.08	-.07*	.01	.21***	.10*
Number of friends and chums	.07*	.02	.19***	.18***	.14***	.12**
Attitudes toward Feminism	.20***	.04	-.18***	.08	.10*	.07

Note. Degrees of freedom are 721 for women and 384 for men except in the cluster of items regarding Attitudes toward Feminism where df = 475 for women and 210 for men.

* $p < .05$, two-tailed.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

Table 2

Results of Planned Comparisons: Feminine Women vs. Three Other Groups

Biographical Item (Abbreviated Content)	Comparison Group[a] Androgynous	Masculine	Indeterminate
Parental antecedents			
Father's encouragement of cognitive curiosity	A > F	---	---
Independence allowed by parents in high school	A > F	---	---
Mother's normal occupational status	---	M > F	---
Mother's educational level	---	M > F	---
Personal variables -- high school			
Self-rated popularity, relative to peers	A > F	---	F > I
Number of important high school positions held	A > F	---	F > I
Membership in organized (non-athletic) activity groups, relative to peers	A > F	---	F > I
Membership in athletic teams	A > F	M > F	---
Number of artistic-creative achievements	A > F	M > F	---
Nurturance given to troubled friends, relative to peers	---	---	F > I
Personal variables -- college			
Self-rated weight, relative to peers	A > F	---	---
Self-rated comfort in social situations	A > F	M > F	F > I
Degree of self-defined "success" to this point in life, relative to peers	A > F	M > F	---
Frequency of being "in good spirits," relative to peers	A > F	---	---
Freedom from "hangups," relative to peers	---	M > F	---
Self-rated athletic ability, relative to peers	A > F	M > F	---

Table 2, continued

Frequency of involvement in team sports	A > F	M > F	---
Frequency of involvement in non-team sports	A > F	M > F	---
Number of good friends	A > F	F > M	F > I
Number of really close friends	---	F > M	F > I
Positiveness of attitude toward the Equal Rights Amendment	---	M > F	---
Attitude toward the "femininity" of professional women	---	M > F	---
Attitude toward the goals of the Feminist Movement	---	M > F	I > F
Attitude regarding how involved women should be in the Feminist Movement	---	M > F	---
Personal variables -- future			
Number of children desired in own future family	---	F > M	F > I

Note. The scoring direction of some items has been reflected so that all high scores would have "positive" meanings. A = androgynous women (n = 160); M = masculine women (n = 91); F = feminine women (n = 338); I = indeterminate women (n = 134).

[a] The group scoring significantly higher ($p < .05$ or better) on the item is shown first in each column.

Table 3

Results of Planned Comparisons: Masculine Men vs. Three Other Groups

Biographical Item (Abbreviated Content)	Comparison Group[a] Androgynous	Feminine	Indeterminate
Parental antecedents			
Father's encouragement of competence	---	---	M > I
Mother's encouragement of competence	---	---	M > I
Positiveness of mother's responses to "good" behavior	---	F > M	I > M
Personal variables -- high school			
Self-rated popularity, relative to peers	---	---	M > I
Number of important high school positions held	A > M	---	M > I
Membership in organized (non-athletic) activity groups, relative to peers	A > M	---	---
Nurturance given to troubled friends, relative to peers	A > M	F > M	---
Personal variables -- college			
Self-rated personal appearance, relative to peers	---	---	M > I
Self-rated comfort in social situations	---	---	M > I
Degree of self-defined "success" to this point in life, relative to peers	---	---	M > I
Frequency of being "in good spirits," relative to peers	---	M > F	---
Self-rated health and physical fitness	---	M > F	---
Self-rated athletic ability, relative to peers	---	M > F	M > I
Frequency of involvement in non-team sports	---	---	M > I
Number of good friends	A > M	---	---

Table 3, continued

Personal variables -- future			
Money-making potential in the next ten years, relative to peers	---	---	M > I

Note. The scoring direction of some items has been reflected so that all high scores would have "positive" meanings. A = androgynous men (n = 92); M = masculine men (n = 178); F = feminine men (n = 44); I = indeterminate men (n = 72).

[a] The group scoring significantly higher ($p < .05$ or better) on the item in shown first in each column.

Table 4

Feelings of Self-confidence in Various Areas (Percentages)

Response Alternatives	Gender	Sex Role Category: Andro.	Mascl.	Femin.	Indet.
Feel self-confident in most phases of activity	Women	71.0	69.2	38.8	42.5
	Men	72.9	75.8	54.6	45.9
Feel self-confident intellectually, less so socially	Women	13.1	19.8	31.1	42.5
	Men	20.7	15.7	25.0	38.9
Feel self-confident socially, less so intellectually	Women	10.6	4.4	16.9	6.0
	Men	5.4	5.6	2.3	6.9
Lack self-confidence both intellectually and socially	Women	6.3	6.6	13.3	9.0
	Men	1.1	2.8	18.2	8.3

Note. For ease of inspection, two response alternatives("very" and "quite" self-confident) have been combined into one response category in the Table. For the original five response alternatives, $X^2(12) = 97.01$, $p < .0001$ for women; $X^2(12) = 46.18$, $p < .0001$ for men.

Table 5

Feelings of Closeness ("Overall, I feel closer to...") (Percentages)

Response Alternative	Gender	Sex Role Category			
		Andro.	Mascl.	Femin.	Indet.
Mother	Women	58.1	57.1	68.3	55.2
	Men	54.3	38.2	61.4	63.9
Father	Women	24.3	23.1	18.3	20.1
	Men	29.3	35.4	29.5	20.8
Neither	Women	17.5	19.8	13.3	24.6
	Men	16.3	26.4	9.1	15.2

Note. For ease of inspection, two response alternatives ("some other family member" and "no family member") have been combined into a "neither" category in this Table. For the original four response alternatives, $X^2(9) = 22.02$, $p < .009$; for women; $X^2(9) = 23.07$, $p < .006$.

Table 6

Selected Future Life Style Alternatives among Women (Percentages)

Life Style Alternative	Sex Role Category			
	Andro.	Mascl.	Femin.	Indet.
To obtain two or more years of education beyond the bachelor's degree	51.5	52.5	33.5	41.0
To marry and have children	82.8	61.0	90.3	75.9
To have three or more children	50.6	33.0	47.9	28.3
To have no children at all	3.1	17.6	5.9	12.7